

Idaho Public Utilities Commission

Case No. IPC-E-13-15, Order No. 32868

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Commission taking comment on Idaho Power growth plan

An Idaho Power Company long-range growth plan is counting on completion of a transmission line from Boardman, Oregon to Melba as its major new resource for power generation over the next 20 years.

Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) projects the 500-kV line will bring in about 500 megawatts of additional power from Northwest energy markets into Idaho Power's southern Idaho territory.

Idaho's regulated electric utilities are required to file an IRP every two years with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. The plan explains how the utility intends to provide adequate and reliable service to its growing customer base at the lowest cost possible over the next two decades. The commission is taking public comment on the plan through Nov. 7.

The IRP is for planning purposes only and is updated to account for changing circumstances. Even if the Idaho Public Utilities Commission accepts the plan, the resource projects outlined must still be reviewed and evaluated for their need and prudence on a case-by-case basis.

Idaho Power anticipates that its customer base will increase from the current 500,000 to about 670,000 by 2032 for an average load increase of 21 MW per year, or 1.1 percent annual growth.

Completion of the transmission line, expected in 2018, along with procuring another 150 MW through energy efficiency and demand reduction programs, was found to be the least cost of nine potential resource portfolios the utility considered, according to the company.

The transmission project has been in Idaho Power's IRP since 2006. The utility is still working on acquiring the necessary regulatory approvals and permitting. Idaho Power has a joint funding agreement for the transmission line with the Bonneville Power Administration and PacifiCorp, which includes eastern Idaho as part of its service territory.

The company hopes to have 150 MW of increased energy efficiency and demand reduction in place by 2017 and increasing that to 370 MW by 2032. A major upgrade of the Shoshone Falls hydroelectric plant, from its current 12.5 MW to 61.5 MW, is set to be completed by 2019.

The utility is also planning on upgrades at two out-of-state coal plants it co-owns with other utilities. Idaho Power currently has a case before the commission seeking authority to include about \$130 million in customer rates for emissions control upgrades at the Jim Bridger plant

near Rock Springs and the North Valmy plant near Winnemucca. A technical hearing in that case is scheduled for Nov. 22.

The Bridger plant, of which Idaho Power owns one-third, provides 770 MW of capacity to Idaho Power customers and the Valmy plant another 283 MW. Idaho Power owns 50 percent of the Valmy plant.

Idaho Power also owns 17 hydroelectric projects, three natural gas-fired plants and one diesel-powered plant. About 45 percent of the utility's generation comes from hydroelectric resources, 30 percent from coal, 14 percent from long-term power purchases, 7 percent from market-purchased power and 4 percent from natural gas and diesel projects. Of the long-term power purchase contracts, 63 percent of the generation comes from wind and 22 percent from hydroelectric resources. The company buys about 789 MW from 103 projects that qualify under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, or PURPA. It also buys all the output from the 100-MW Elkhorn Valley wind project in northeast Oregon.

Copies of the plan are available on the commission's Web site at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click on "Open Cases" under the Electric heading and scroll down to Case No. IPC-E-13-15. To make comments from the website, click on "Case Comment or Question Form" under the Consumers heading and enter the above case number. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

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